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Viewing cable 06PORTAUPRINCE1407, HAITI: A/S SHANNON'S MEETING WITH MINUSTAH SRSG

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#06PORTAUPRINCE1407.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06PORTAUPRINCE1407	2006-08-02 19:01	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Port Au Prince

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 001407

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/02/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: HAITI: A/S SHANNON'S MEETING WITH MINUSTAH SRSG

REF: A. PAP 1393
[1](#)B. PAP 1386

PORT AU PR 00001407 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Edmond Mulet warned A/S Shannon on July 25 that provocations by former president Aristide and his supporters could erode Haiti's post-electoral stability. Mulet said that President Preval's public silence about security problems and inability to decide on a strategy have made it difficult for MINUSTAH to take concrete measures to improve security. Over the long term, Mulet feared Latin troop-contributors' military commitment to Haiti could wane, and he encouraged the U.S. to weigh-in with them in favor of a continued presence. Mulet previewed the UNSYG's report on Haiti, saying it would call for a one-year extension of the mandate and a more active MINUSTAH role on justice and security issues. To improve the security situation, Mulet asked the U.S. to expand its drug interdiction efforts in Haiti and ease the U.S. embargo on weapons and ammunition for the Haitian National Police and UN forces. A/S Shannon assured Mulet of strong USG support for MINUSTAH and our eagerness to see its stabilization mission succeed. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon and Ambassador Sanderson, along with A/DCM and WHA/CAR Director Brian Nichols, met for an hour-long conversation with MINUSTAH SRSG Edmond Mulet, on the margins of the July 25 Haiti Donors' Conference.

GOH does not Control Provinces
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[1](#)3. (C) Mulet described the difficulties facing MINUSTAH and the Haitian government. He rued the "complete lack of the state" in Haiti, especially outside the capital, where the GOH has been unable to enforce the rule of law. For example, he explained that leaders in the northern town of Ouanaminthe have created their own criminal fiefdom. As a result, drug trafficking has become an increasingly alarming problem, which is difficult to combat, in part because of the drug ties within the Haitian Government. In this connection, he mentioned Senate leader Joseph Lambert and Security Commission Chair Youri Latortue -- describing the latter as a "drug dealer." Mulet continued that the judicial system could not impose the rule of law, because the Haitian National Police (HNP) lacked investigation skills and the few judges who have not been corrupted feared ruling against drug-related criminals. Without the basic rule of law, MINUSTAH's progress and development work in Haiti have been severely limited.

Aristide Movement Must be Stopped
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[1](#)4. (C) Mulet also worried that former president Jean Bertrand Aristide's influence could continue to disrupt government and UN progress in Haiti. Mulet claimed Aristide has sent agents to Haiti to rally support for his return. These instigators have stoked public fear and warned of a new round of violence in Port-au-Prince. Mulet said that at his request, on the margins of last month's African Union summit, UNSYG Annan had urged South African President Mbeki to ensure that Aristide remained in South Africa. Mbeki reportedly replied that Aristide's presence cost the Mbeki government financially

through security and housing expenses and prompted significant political criticism from the opposition. Judging Aristide's continued tenure in South Africa uncertain, Mulet urged U.S. legal action against Aristide to prevent the former president from gaining more traction with the Haitian population and returning to Haiti.

GOH Unsure on Security

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15. (C) Mulet said he meets nearly daily with Preval and Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis on the situation in Haiti. Preval frequently has a clear plan of action that he wants MINUSTAH to pursue. However, when MINUSTAH develops operational plans based on Preval's wishes, the President then changes his mind and proposes an entirely different approach. Preval's indecision has left MINUSTAH planners and troops unable to develop a coordinated strategy with the GOH in response to the security situation. Publicly, Preval has accompanied his indecision by complete silence, which is working to erode his government's credibility. Mulet said that when he encouraged Preval to speak out, the President replied that "silence is my best ally."

Renewed Mandate to Focus on Rule of Law

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16. (C) Mulet previewed the UNSYG's report on Haiti, stating that the report would recommend that the Security Council extend MINUSTAH's mandate for one-year and focus its efforts towards security and the rule of law. He continued that he had initially sought an "executive mandate," with greater powers under Chapter VII, the UNSYG had encouraged him to seek a more focused force configuration within the current mandate. To achieve that, Mulet said MINUSTAH planned to add anti-kidnapping experts, Honduran SWAT units, and Peruvian special forces that will allow it to take on gangs and crime directly. Mulet said increased MINUSTAH effectiveness in support of democratic institutions and economic development will hinge on the ability of the donor countries to coordinate their assistance programs. He cited the HNP as an example of the international community's failure to work in concert. Each donor country has pushed its own policing model and donor efforts contradicted one another. Mulet suggested that police donors offer a seminar for the GOH that explains the various policing models and lets the GOH choose. He regretted that the HNP reform plan has been "sitting on the Prime Minister's desk" for about one month, awaiting final signature.

Elections Pose Challenge

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17. (C) In response to A/S Shannon's query, Mulet said that he opposed holding municipal and legislative elections later this fall. Under the constitution, Haiti must hold up to 11 elections during Preval's term, including runoffs. For example, next year, one-third of the Senate will face election. This will entail a nation-wide vote that will cost an estimated USD 30 million. Mulet added that election of municipal and local governments will lead to a major financial burden on the government, which lacks the resources to sustain such a heavy administrative structure. Mulet has raised these concerns with Preval and suggested that the government amend the constitution to streamline these processes. But, Preval rejected delaying local elections, stressing the importance of municipal and local government to development of the judiciary and electoral council under Haitian law. Preval reportedly did not want to fast track changes in the constitution. Due to a complicated amendment formula, it would take some nine years to effect constitutional change, under the existing rules.

MINUSTAH Could Lose Steam Over Long Run

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18. (C) Over the long-term, Mulet worried that fatigue from MINUSTAH's military and police contributors as well as

Venezuela's possible election to the Security Council could jeopardize MINUSTAH's mandate. Mulet explained that though Argentina is committed through February of 2007, it has considered lowering its troop commitment to Haiti. Meanwhile, Chile has already recuperated three helicopters from MINUSTAH, which has significantly limited MINUSTAH's mobility. Mulet reported that the seven South American troop contributors are planning a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense in Buenos Aires on August 4 to discuss troop levels and the MINUSTAH mandate. In addition, he worried that Venezuela's possible election to the Security Council could jeopardize Haiti's Chapter VII status. Mulet said that the Venezuelan ambassador to Haiti had told him that in Caracas' view Haiti does not require a Chapter VII mission.

Possible U.S. Roles

19. (C) Mulet asked for U.S. assistance in a number of areas to help bolster the UN's effort in Haiti. He said that increased U.S. anti-drug efforts south of Hispaniola could disrupt the drug trade and help Haitian authorities regain control in the provinces. He also asked that the USG carve out exceptions for the UN and HNP in its arms embargo against Haiti. While he said that some of the UN military contingents brought their own ammunition with them, many of them need to re-supply from the U.S. Finally, he applauded U.S. efforts to train South American peacekeepers, which he said directly contributed to continued interest by countries such as Bolivia to contribute military contingents to Haiti. A/S Shannon assured Mulet of strong USG support for MINUSTAH and its stabilization role. Shannon offered -- and subsequently followed through (reftels A and B) -- to press Preval and Prime Minister Alexis to take more forceful action on security issues, in close coordination with MINUSTAH. Shannon and Mulet agreed that, if MINUSTAH fails to stabilize Haiti during this period of opportunity, then it is likely the international community will have to return to Haiti with a larger and more costly operation in the future.

Comment

10. (C) Mulet is an articulate and focused SRSG who has a good grasp of the challenges facing his mission despite being in his job only seven weeks. His frustration with Preval's inaction and indecision is evident. Mulet clearly wants MINUSTAH to take a more assertive approach to security than his predecessor and should enjoy greater political leeway in Latin capitals to do so in support of a democratically elected government.
SANDERSON